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Great balls of fire: at long last, a new UFO

By WARREN WATSON

A resident Sunday described it as a "reddish ball fluttering in the sunset."

Twenty-five years ago, another resident described a similar phenomenon as a "ball of fire" moving vertically.

A coincidence? Unidentified flying objects 25 years apart?

Well, Phyllis Cunningham and other residents of East Gloucester are shaking their heads just as residents were shaking their heads Aug. 28, 1954, when they spotted what they called a flying saucer over Cape Ann.

Sunday around 8:30 p.m., Mrs. Cunningham of 46 Decatur St. said she saw the strange object in the night sky. "It was round — like the sun. It fluttered. It wiggled," she said.

Other residents noted the same phenomenon, but neither Ralph Barker of Old Salt's Weather Service nor the National Weather Service in Deadham had received any calls.

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"Probably a weather balloon," said Barker, matter-of-factly today. "They're here all the time and we don't know it."

But a spokesman in the Blue Hills Observatory in Deadham said he had no record of a balloon in the Cape Ann area.

Exactly 25 years ago, Barker also guessed the strange object was a balloon. But then, officials said they had no information about any craft being released above the area.

Residents said the UFO seemed about 20,000 to 30,000 feet high and slightly to the northwest.

Checks with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force yielded no new information. Barker was still shaking his head days later.

Both matters are still up in the air.

TOM LIND